



Cargo and Freight Agents

LOGISTICS

Table of Contents *(scroll or use links below to navigate document)*

Job Overview

Typical Tasks

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

Work Environment

Job Outlook and Wages

Trends

Training

Where Do I Find the Job?

Where Can the Job Lead?

Other Sources



View Career Video

Job Overview

Cargo and Freight Agents arrange for and track incoming and outgoing cargo and freight shipments in airline, train, or trucking terminals or on shipping docks. They expedite the movement of shipments by determining the route that shipments are to take and by preparing all necessary shipping documents. The Agents take orders from customers and arrange pickup of freight or cargo for delivery to loading platforms. Cargo and Freight Agents may keep records of the properties of the cargo, such as its amount, type, weight, and dimensions. They keep a tally of missing items, record the condition of damaged items, and document any excess supplies.

Cargo and Freight Agents arrange cargo according to its destination. They also determine the shipping rates and other charges that can sometimes apply to the freight. For imported or exported freight, they verify that the proper customs paperwork is in order. Cargo and Freight Agents often track shipments electronically using bar codes and answer customers' inquiries on the status of their shipments.

Typical Tasks

- Negotiate and arrange transport of goods with shipping or freight companies.
- Notify consignees, passengers, or customers of the arrival of freight or baggage, and arrange for delivery.
- Advise clients on transportation and payment methods.
- Prepare manifests showing baggage, mail, and freight weights, and number of passengers on airplanes, and transmit data to destinations.
- Determine method of shipment, and prepare bills of lading, invoices, and other shipping documents.
- Check import/export documentation to determine cargo contents, and classify goods into different fee or tariff groups, using a tariff coding system.
- Estimate freight or postal rates, and record shipment costs and weights.
- Enter shipping information into a computer by hand or by using a hand-held scanner that reads bar codes on goods.

Cargo and Freight Agents

- ➔ Retrieve stored items and trace lost shipments as necessary.
- ➔ Pack goods for shipping, using tools such as staplers, strapping machines, and hammers.
- ➔ Direct delivery trucks to shipping doors or designated areas, and help load and unload goods safely.

*Detailed descriptions of this occupation may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- ➔ Reading Comprehension — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- ➔ Active Listening — Giving full attention to what people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- ➔ Critical Thinking — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- ➔ Speaking — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- ➔ Transportation — Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
- ➔ Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
- ➔ Near Vision — The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
- ➔ Problem Sensitivity — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

Work Environment

Cargo and Freight Agents may work indoors or outdoors. The working conditions vary depending on the type of employer. Agents working in large warehouses, on shipping docks, or in airline, train, or trucking terminals may experience uncomfortable temperatures or weather conditions. Most positions involve frequent standing, bending, walking, reaching, lifting, and carrying of smaller items. They sometimes work under pressure to move cargo in or out according to tight time schedules, which may be stressful. This often occurs during certain times of the year, such as Christmas, when companies receive rush orders.

Cargo and Freight Agents must have patience and the ability to work independently and maintain good working relationships with coworkers. They generally work 40 hours per week. However, they may work longer hours if deliveries arrive at an unexpected time. Shift work may be available at larger companies.

Many Cargo and Freight Agents are members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Cargo and Freight Agents

California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2004	Estimated Number of Workers 2014	Average Annual Openings	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
Cargo and Freight Agents				
43-5011	13,200	13,700	350	\$14.82 to \$28.00

Wages do not reflect self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Trends

Employment of Cargo and Freight Agents is expected to grow slower than average compared with all occupations in California. Technological advances are responsible for the slower growth rate. For example, the increasing use of bar codes and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags on cargo and freight allows Agents and customers to track these shipments quickly over the Internet, rather than manually tracking their location. However, job openings will continue to occur due to increases in purchasing over the Internet, which results in the need for more shipments. Also, the popularity and importance of same-day delivery helps to expand the role of Agents.

An estimated 3,000 job opportunities will be created by the need to replace Cargo and Freight Agents who quit, retire, or leave the occupation for other reasons during the projected period.

Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Employers prefer to hire workers with a high school diploma and those that have computer and clerical skills. Informal training in the use of automated equipment is given to Cargo and Freight Agents on the job.

Recommended High School Course Work

High School preparation courses in English, general business, business mathematics, and computer technology are helpful.

Where Do I Find the Job?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods.

Use the *Search for Employers by Industry* feature on the *Career Center* page at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov to locate employers in your area. Search under the following industry names to get a list of private firms and their addresses:

- ➡ Couriers
- ➡ Freight Transportation Arrangement
- ➡ General Freight Trucking, Local
- ➡ General Warehousing and Storage
- ➡ Other Specialized Trucking, Long-Dist
- ➡ Other Warehousing and Storage
- ➡ Refrigerated Warehousing and Storage
- ➡ Scheduled Freight Air Transportation

Cargo and Freight Agents

- Other Nonscheduled Air Transportation
- Other Specialized Trucking, Local
- Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation
- Used Household and Office Goods Moving

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- Air Cargo & Package Express Service
- Freight Forwarding
- Packing & Crating Service
- Railroad Companies
- Ships & Ship Operation
- Trucking-Motor Freight
- Trucking Transportation Brokers

Where Can the Job Lead?

Advancement opportunities for Cargo and Freight Agents are limited. However, with increased experience, individuals with leadership ability may advance to a general manager or warehouse manager position. Lateral moves to similar positions such as shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks, or weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers may offer opportunities to gain additional skills.

Related Occupations

Postal Service Mail Carriers (see Logistics Profile)

Meter Readers, Utilities

Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks (see Logistics Profile)

Couriers and Messengers (see Logistics Profile)

Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping

Truck Drivers (see Logistics Profile)

Driver/Sales Workers (see Logistics Profile)

Other Sources

The American Institute for Shippers' Associations, Inc.
www.shippers.org

California Association of Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
www.carocp.org/carocps.html

The International Air Cargo Association
www.tiaca.org

National Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of America
www.ncbfaa.org

National Shippers Strategic Transportation Council
www.nasstrac.org

International Brotherhood of Teamsters
www.teamster.org